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Saturday March 19, 1977

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Saturday March 19, 1977

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Dissidents and the Regime

[redacted] Zdenek Horeni, the deputy editor of the Czechoslovak party daily, recently discussed with the US ambassador the regime's policy toward dissidents; he is the first Czechoslovak official willing to do so with a US diplomat.

[redacted] Horeni, however, broke no new ground. He began by noting that the US added "quite a new dimension" to bilateral relations when the State Department issued its statement in January supporting the dissidents. He rejected the statement as intolerable interference in his country's internal affairs, as the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry had done earlier.

[redacted] The newspaper official declared that Czechoslovak strategy is to "isolate" the signers of the Charter 77 manifesto. Asked whether the regime would use expulsion, imprisonment, or simply propaganda attacks, Horeni did not rule out the possibility of bringing the Chartists to trial.

[redacted] The Charter 77 document, he maintained, is an "illegal pamphlet" because it was issued by an organized movement not registered with the government. He hinted that the signers might be charged with "espionage" or treason because of the challenge that their activities pose to the country's political system.

[redacted] Horeni did not foreclose less severe options. He made vague references to possible "reconciliation" and reiterated the government's earlier statement that the signers were free to emigrate. Horeni also maintained the regime's assertion that no dissident has been arrested only for signing the manifesto, although some had been jailed for other illegal acts. [redacted]

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ZAIRE-ANGOLA: Military Situation

25X1 [] There has been little new reporting on the military situation in the Shaba region of Zaire. Zairian military units apparently still hold Mutshatsha and Kolwezi on the road to Lubumbashi.

25X1 [] The weather is probably a significant factor affecting troop movements. [] a Zairian unit that started for Sandoa several days ago became mired in mud from the heaviest rains in 15 years in that area. Even in good weather, the drive from Mutshatsha to Kolwezi can take up to four hours. Both the advance of the Katangans and reinforcement by the Zairians will clearly take considerable time. 25X1

25X1 [] In addition to the weather and the poor transportation network, the Zairian military is continuing to have communications difficulties throughout the Shaba area, particularly with forward units. Moreover, the US defense attache reports that Zairian intelligence on the Katangan force is abysmal.

25X1 [] The Angolans may want to guard against a possible Zairian strike in retaliation for the Shaba invasion--earlier this month Luanda publicly asserted that Zaire would mount a large military operation against Angola later this year.

25X1 [] It is also possible the Angolans are preparing an attack of their own into the Bas-Zaire region to retaliate for continued Zairian support for National Front activities. The Angolan press yesterday reported that Zairian-based guerrillas had massacred civilians in Angola.

25X1 [] Angolan President Neto has clearly embarked on a strong course of action to reduce his serious insurgency problem, which he realizes will take years to eliminate. He knows he must significantly reduce the insurgency in order to get the economy back on its feet and restore some semblance of social order.

25X1 [] Yesterday Luanda announced the impending visit of Cuban President Fidel Castro to Angola. The timing is still not known--Castro will be in Tanzania at least until Monday, and then apparently is scheduled to visit Mozambique. His first trip to Angola, particularly at this time, is likely to be the occasion for important statements on Cuba's Africa policy.

25X1 [] Peking made its first authoritative public statement supporting Kinshasa's handling of the invasion yesterday. A "People's Daily" article praised Zaire's "heroic counterattacks" against "Soviet-hired" troops from Angola. The article also suggested that the Soviets tried to use the invasion to sabotage the Afro-Arab summit conference earlier this month. It carefully avoided any mention of Cuban involvement in the Zaire action.

25X1 [] Mobutu has told the US ambassador that Zaire is asking Nigeria to take the lead in calling for an investigation of the Shaba invasion by the Organization of African Unity. Nigeria

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has apparently offered its good offices regarding Zaire's problems with Angola; the Nigerians may have some influence in Luanda because of their past strong support for Neto. Mobutu has also asked the Belgians and French to suggest diplomatic steps to help ease the crisis, and both reportedly agree that the OAU initiative is the proper course.

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CONGO: Assassination of President

Brazzaville radio this morning announced the death of Congolese President Marien Ngouabi, who was shot yesterday by members of his guard. The announcement said an 11-man military committee is now running the government.

//Ngouabi had been in power since leading a military coup in 1968. The assassination may well have been part of a plot by some of his disgruntled associates. Ngouabi's standing had eroded considerably in recent months because of his failure to come to grips with the country's steadily deteriorating economic situation, and he had come under open criticism from some members of the government. the government has been having difficulties in meeting its payroll for government employees, including the military.//

The country--already tribally and ideologically divided--may be headed for a power struggle and a period of protracted turmoil.

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PAKISTAN: Demonstrations in Major Cities

25X1 [] The security situation in Pakistan may be worsening following the arrest of five opposition leaders on Thursday and Friday. According to press reports, demonstrations--all of which resulted in clashes with the police--were held Friday in all major cities.

25X1 [] The opposition has denounced the National Assembly election of March 7 as fraudulent and is demanding Prime Minister Bhutto's resignation and new elections. Shortly before the arrests they rejected Bhutto's proposal for talks and announced major demonstrations for Friday.

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[] Bhutto had appeared to be trying to avoid any strong action against opposition leaders. On Monday, for example, when opposition leaders courted arrest, the police either ignored them or detained them only briefly. Bhutto is certainly aware of the dangers of his tougher policy. His own arrest in late 1968 contributed to the ferment that brought down President Ayub Khan a few months later.

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[] Bhutto may have ordered the arrests to limit violence on Friday, a Muslim holy day on which demonstrations were likely to draw more participants. If so, he might release the opposition leaders quickly and limit the damage.

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[] On the other hand, if Bhutto has concluded that he can counter the opposition's campaign only with strong measures, he has risked giving his opponents the issue they need to bring him down.

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[] Bhutto might have been somewhat encouraged by his ability to control the situation in 1975 after arresting Wali Khan. Wali--whose wife was arrested Thursday--was the most prominent opposition leader at that time, but his support was limited to the two provinces on the Afghan border and many Pakistanis believed he was plotting to break up the nation.

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[] Former air force commander Asghar Khan, the most prominent of those arrested late Thursday, emerged as the leading opposition spokesman during the recent election campaign. He draws most of his support from the heavily populated provinces which will determine Bhutto's political survival. The retired air marshal is widely regarded as one of the few politicians with strong principles and still commands considerable loyalty in the military. []

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SOMALIA: Red Sea Summit Planned

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[] Sudanese President Numayri is visiting Somalia prior to a meeting with the leaders of Somalia and North and South Yemen in Taiz, North Yemen, scheduled for Tuesday. Numayri, who clearly has full Saudi Arabian and Egyptian backing, will urge the South Yemenis and Somalis to limit Soviet and leftist influence in the Red Sea region.

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[] The summit should indicate whether the four countries are willing to cooperate in efforts to assure the security of the Red Sea area. It may also give a clue to Somalia's reaction to the increasing Soviet influence in Ethiopia--Somalia's bitter enemy. Ethiopia has denounced the summit.

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[] The summit closely follows Cuban President Fidel Castro's trip to Ethiopia and Somalia, underscoring the fluid political situation in the southern Red Sea region. In addition to trying to promote a Somali-Ethiopian reconciliation, Castro may have tried to dissuade the Somalis from turning to Saudi Arabia and other wealthy oil states for badly needed economic assistance.

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[] Saudi Arabia is thinking of offering Somalia up to \$300 million in economic assistance in an effort to draw the Somalis away from the Soviets. The Saudis are giving South Yemen economic aid in a similar effort. Saudi support for Numayri's efforts is suggested by a Sudanese newspaper report that Sudanese Foreign Minister Khalid, who is traveling with Numayri, will go to Riyadh directly from Taiz immediately following the summit.

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[] Numayri's Red Sea security offensive presents Somali President Siad with the need to make some immediate choices. If Siad should refuse to attend the meeting in Taiz, he would risk further isolating Somalia from its Arab neighbors. Turning his back on the efforts of moderate, pro-Western Arab states to transform the Red Sea into an "Arab lake" would also jeopardize his hopes for economic assistance from them.

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[] Should Siad attend, however, he would be clearly signaling the Soviets of his disapproval of their growing ties with Ethiopia, and that he has other friends.

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[] Numayri is laying the groundwork for the summit with his current visit with Siad in Mogadiscio. He will move on to Aden for talks with South Yemeni Presidential Council Chairman Ali and North Yemeni President Hamdi tomorrow and Monday. []

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FRANCE: Municipal Election Runoff

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[] The second round of voting tomorrow in the French municipal elections will pit the unified center-right forces of the governing coalition against united leftist slates in 65 cities with populations of over 30,000. The result of the runoff will significantly shape public opinion and help determine strategies for next year's parliamentary election.

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[] The Socialist and Communist opposition has managed to stick together for the most part and has agreed to present single lists in nearly all cities where its candidates competed against each other in the first round. How many voters will shift their votes from one leftist party to another remains to be seen, however. The governing coalition has agreed to run single slates in all but a few cities where two competing conservative lists threaten to give victories to the left.

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[] About 78 percent of eligible voters participated in the first round. The second round may bring out additional conservative voters concerned about gains by the left in the first round. How the ecologist vote--10 percent in Paris but only 2 percent in the nation as a whole--is distributed will be important in the capital and a few other cities.

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[] The first round made it painfully clear that President Giscard will have to abandon his long-held hope of building a new majority around the center by lopping off a portion of the right-wing Gaullists and attracting moderate Socialists. The governing coalition will need all the Gaullist votes it can get if it is to check the left, which won 52 percent of the vote in the larger cities and gained control in 32 cities previously held by the governing coalition. The centrists as a whole did badly; if this trend is confirmed by the second round, it is likely to result in some cabinet changes.

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[] In Paris, Gaullist leader Jacques Chirac has refused to give Minister of Industry d'Ornano the post of assistant mayor (responsible for the budget) in return for the Independent Republicans supporting Chirac in the Paris city council's voting for mayor. They agreed only that each will withdraw his list in those districts where the other had come out ahead.

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[] Chirac, who is virtually assured of the mayoralty because of his list's lead over d'Ornano's, has indicated that his deputies will not create any problems when parliament reconvenes that might lead to an early election. Gaullist Secretary General Jerome Monod has admitted that the party needs a year to prepare itself for the contest with the left next spring.

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[] Chirac continues to insist, however, that the good showing of the right in Paris, as opposed to elsewhere, is due to his tactic of confronting the left rather than following Giscard's more conciliatory approach. The relationship between Giscard and his former prime minister promises to be thorny despite their need to work together. A conservative victory in the moderate stronghold of Paris, culminating in Chirac's election as mayor, may prove more bitter for Giscard than the defeat of his coalition elsewhere in France.

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SPAIN: Reaction to Amnesty Decree

[] Spain's troubled Basque provinces have given a positive but guarded reaction to the broadened amnesty decree published on Thursday. The government issued the amnesty in part as an effort to restore calm to the area, which recently has been the scene of bitter clashes between Basque extremists and the Civil Guard; the effect of the amnesty will rest in large part on how soon and how widely the government chooses to implement the new measures.

[] The new decree extends the royal amnesty of last July to all prisoners not convicted of murder or crimes of bodily harm. Those imprisoned for "blood crimes" will have their sentences reduced by periods of up to 12 years. The government also has reserved the power to pardon, commute sentences, or grant conditional liberty to those convicted of crimes not covered by other provisions of the amnesty.

[] The government thus appears to have broad latitude to meet even the most extreme Basque demands for the early release of the nearly 200 political prisoners. It feels constrained to move cautiously, however, in order not to upset conservative members of the military.

25X1 [] Although responsible Basque leaders have reacted favorably to the amnesty, they insist it must be implemented expeditiously if it is to help restore calm to the area between now and parliamentary elections this summer. The amnesty's effectiveness has been undercut by a wave of violence in the Basque provinces which has resulted in four deaths since March 8. Basque extremist groups have threatened further retaliation for the Civil Guard slaying of two suspected terrorists last week and subsequent Civil Guard brutality against demonstrators.

25X1 [] The cycle of violence is likely to continue until the government can dampen the hatred between the Basques and the Civil Guard. The new head of the Civil Guard is considering moving his command posts out of the major population centers in a possible effort to reduce the likelihood of future serious confrontations. []

GREECE-TURKEY: Military Exercise

25X1 [] //Tensions between Greece and Turkey may increase with the beginning next week of Turkey's annual series of air and naval exercises aimed in part at underscoring its substantially increased claims in the Aegean.//

25X1 [] //As with earlier exercises, the one scheduled for March 21 to 28 will be held over international waters, but it has drawn Greek protests because it will interrupt communications between the Greek mainland and the easternmost Greek islands for a considerable time. It also ignores a Greek claim to sovereignty over a 10-mile airspace around Greek islands, which the Turks had accepted until 1974. Turkey now acknowledges only the more traditional six-mile limit.//

25X1 [] Both sides have tended to adopt a rigid approach in pre-exercise jockeying to protect their respective claims, but

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they have shown more caution during the exercises. The Greeks have indicated that they may be less tolerant of future Turkish incursions into Greek-claimed airspace or of being cut off from their islands, however. [REDACTED]

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INTERNATIONAL: Law of the Sea

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[REDACTED] Recent informal discussions in Geneva among participants in the UN Law of the Sea conference indicate that substantial differences remain on the issue of deep seabed mining.

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[REDACTED] This issue has been one of the most contentious in the Law of the Sea negotiations. The Geneva meeting was called to present positions and seek compromises on questions connected with seabed mining--access to the seabed, financing of the proposed international machinery for seabed exploitation, and production controls--before the next formal session of the full Law of the Sea conference in May.

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[REDACTED] The division over the issue of seabed mining is squarely drawn between the developed and the developing countries. The developing countries argue that the seabed and its mineral nodules are the "common heritage of mankind" and that any financial benefits from their mining should belong to all people, primarily the needier nations.

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[REDACTED] The developing countries have argued that an international authority with broad and discretionary powers should be set up to supervise seabed development and eventually to exploit the seabed exclusively through its own mining entity, known as the Enterprise.

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[REDACTED] The demand for exclusive seabed exploitation by the proposed international body is at the center of the dispute. The major industrialized states, which alone possess the technology to mine seabed nodules, insist that any treaty contain explicit assurances that states and their nationals and corporations--public and private--will have equal opportunities to exploit the seabed's resources.

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[REDACTED] The developed states argue that they have already granted a major concession to developing-country demands by

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proposing a "banking system." Under this proposal, a mining entity would apply to the international authority for the right to mine two tracts; the authority would decide which one of the two the mining entity could exploit and reserve the second tract for its own mining activities.

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[] The developing countries do not accept the banking system as a sufficient compromise. Most developing countries recognize that, at least for the short term, the financial and technological resources of the developed states are indispensable to seabed mining. The developing states continue to insist, however, that there can be no automatic guarantee of access for private entities and that any parallel access--if some form is eventually worked out--would only be on an interim basis, probably from 20 to 25 years.

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[] Developing-country demands are accelerating on other aspects of the seabed mining issue as well. Most conference participants have informally accepted the principle of limiting seabed production of nickel to a portion of the growth in world demand for the mineral. At the Geneva meeting, however, some leading developing states wanted to impose explicit production limits for all nodule minerals--copper, cobalt, manganese, and nickel. These production limits, moreover, would remain in effect until comprehensive commodity agreements on all these minerals are worked out internationally.

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[] The Geneva meetings of the past two weeks reflected the willingness of the participants to work toward some resolution, even if positions remain far apart. The meetings also indicate, however, that the longer the seabed mining issues remain unsettled, the stronger the motivation will become for the developing states to link limited objectives in the Law of the Sea negotiations to the broader question of a readjusted North-South relationship. []

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